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THE
ARTICLES
OF THE
CHURCH
Weighed against the
GOSPEL;
AND FOUND WANTING:

OR,

A third ATTEMPT to draw Christians
to the Belief and Practice of Christianity;

With some QUERIES relative thereto,

To which is added,

The Public Recantation of
George Williams, the Heretic;

AND ALSO

The CREED of a CHURCH-MAN.

*Lo, This only have I found, that God hath made Man upright; but
They have sought out many inventions, SOLOMON Eccles. vii. 29.*

*No Man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw
him.——Every Man therefore that hath heard, and hath
learned of the Father, cometh unto me. J. Christ. JOHN vi. 44-45.*

*English Priestcraft is as coarse as the Romish Priestcraft is fine,
Theirs is the depths of Satan, and ours his shallows.*

S. JOHNSON.

By GEORGE WILLIAMS, a Livery-Servant.

Printed for T. BECKET, and Co. in the Strand. MDCCLXVII.

[Price One Shilling.]

THE ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH GO SPLENDIDLY AND FOUND WANTING

A bold ATTEMPT to draw Christians
 to the Pellet and Patches of Christianity
 With long QUOTES relative thereto.

The History of the
 Church of England, the History of
 AND ALSO
 The Creed of a CHURCH-MAN.

By George Whitaker, a Private-Servant.
 Printed for T. BARNARD, in the Strand, MDCCCLXVII.



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We ought to obey God rather than Man. Acts 5. 29.

IT may seem a very bold stroke to attack the Articles of the established Church, especially for a Person in the lowest station in Life. But we are told by a late very learned Writer, that "every Man may, with decent Restrictions, Publish as well as enjoy, his own Opinion." I have therefore, to avoid giving offence, endeavoured to express myself in the Words of learned Authors*: and have (I think) given a total overthrow to the obnoxious Articles of our Church, in the words of Christ and his Apostles. In my first *Attempt*, I demonstrated the Unity of God, from Texts of Scripture, that no body, as far as I know, have disputed. In the second *Attempt*, the Worship of the one God and Father of all, is established beyond a Possibility of overthrowing it: and I have the pleasure to observe, no body has attempted it. In this third *Attempt*, I have followed the same Method of ocular Demonstration, which is the strongest Proof that can be given to any Doctrine. This kind of Proof needs no Defence. It would be ridiculous to go about to prove that 2 and 2 make 4, or that 2 and 1 make 3. Moreover, my Challenge has never been accepted, viz. no body has been able to find *one* Text of Scripture to prove, that three Persons are one God: and nothing material has appeared against the unity of God. Mr. Evans's Sermons prove nothing to me but that there is no End of Controversy: They contain no direct Answer to my first *Attempt*; and the second is left unanswered in its full strength; and almost every Text he lays any Strefs upon, fully accounted for in the Defence of the *Appeal*, a Book never answered—no solid Answer can be given to it. The learned Author is alive. It is very wonderful to observe learned Men ransacking the Bible § for Doctrines not to be found there: when at the same time the Truth is looking them full in the Face. The Truth is, the Light of the Gospel is too strong for their Eyes. I shall therefore, take no notice of
any

* Particularly, some Letters between a young Gentleman and his Uncle, &c. Printed for WAUGH, 1758.

§ A writer recommended by Dr. Wells, has given us the Trinity in the words following.—The Lord shall be my God.—O ye Princes, lift up your Gates.—With the Antient, is Wisdom.—Lift up thy Face to God.—

ADVERTISEMENT.

any Reply, which shall be made to this *Attempt*. I have been as brief as I well could, and have avoided multiplying Evidence, because my Opponents seem to pay no Regard to Reason or Scripture. Whoever will examine the Gospel, will find it in full Force against the Articles I have attacked.

The number of *Unitarians* is very considerable, and increasing daily: and some of the first Nobility are among them. If any Laws exist in favour of the Articles, which are in opposition to the Gospel, they ought to be repealed directly. Popery and Superstition decline, even in Popish Countries; and shall they be encouraged in Britain? God forbid!

Let us, then, in earnest, do something for the Honour and Glory of God, and the Cause of Truth. For if we spend all our Time and Talents on the things of this Life, we shall be rejected as unprofitable Servants, by our Judge, who will call us to account very soon; for after Death comes Judgment. Would the Governors of our Church consider this, surely they would with vigour set about a Reformation, as a thing of more importance than all the Acquisitions in the World, and of the greatest Honour to themselves.

I pray God Almighty to give his blessing to this *Attempt* to restore Christian Religion, to the purity and simplicity of the Gospel of his Son, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Why then should I look upon a Maid,——i. e. the Almighty born of a Virgin, by the Power of the highett, &c. ———The notion that God Almighty was born of one of his Creatures, has been revived of late by some learned Persons. To them and all others who believe and maintain this foolish Absurdity, I would recommend the following Invocation:

“Be merciful, O Lady! spare us O Lady! deliver us from all Evil: O most merciful Lady, we beseech that thou wouldest vouchsafe to preserve the Holy Church, &c. Mother of God, Queen of Heaven, Lady of the World, have mercy on us.”

MISSAL,

HIS MAJESTY'S
DECLARATION.

Either JAMES I. or CHARLES I.

Being by God's Ordinance, according to our just Title, Defender of the Faith, &c.——We hold it most agreeable to this our Kingly Office——not to suffer unnecessary Disputations or Questions to be raised.——That out of our Princely Care——We will that all curious Search be laid aside——And that no Man hereafter shall either Print or Preach to draw the Articles aside any way,——he or they the Offenders shall be liable to our Displeasure, and the Church's Censure.——And we will see that there shall be due Execution upon them.

Church Articles of Religion.

Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? Acts XIX. 15.

A R T I C L E I.

THERE is but one living and true God, and in the unity of this Godhead there be three Persons of one Substance, Power and Eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

There is but one living and true God. This is a direct Contradiction to the Second and Fifth Articles. For it is said in the former, that the *Son* is very and eternal God; and in the latter, that the *Holy Ghost* is very and eternal God. Admit the Father to be very and eternal God; and then we have three eternal Gods, equally Supreme, “*without any Difference or Inequality.*” It may be objected, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are eternal, but not living Gods, till united together they make one living and true God. But this is false, and Christ shall prove it. For the Father hath Life in himself, so hath he *given* to the Son, to have Life in himself. Again: As the *Living* Father has *sent* me, and *I live by the Father.*

JOHN V. 26. — VI. 57.

To

To say, that *there are three Persons in the Godhead*, is an Assertion, that hath not the least Foundation in Scripture. There is not one Sentence, not one Word in the *Christian Revelation* to support it. I will overthrow this 1st. Article directly. There is *One God*, and there is none other but He. *Mark xi. 32.* To us there is but *One God*, the *Father*, of whom are all things. *1. Cor. viii. 6.* To the Truth of this I bring Witness, viz. The One and *only True God*; I mean the *Father* of Christ: *Athanasius*. That *One God* is Father of all: — There is but One God the Father: Bishop Pearson. The Father of Jesus Christ to be alone the One true God, we confess that this Assertion is most true: Bishop Bull. Christ — was exalted by the Supreme God to a State of Power, &c. Dr. Bennet. The Father, the Head and Fountain of all; whose Authority he (Christ) exercised, &c. *Waterland*. The Father is the *Principal* — he is of *himself* and of no other; which is not, nor can be said of the *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*: Bishop Tillotson. The co-equality. — “I would observe, that no one pleads for this Doctrine:” *Caleb Evans**. Proofs of the Unity of God, would be endless. I shall only observe in the Words of Bishop Bull — All Prayers are directed to God in the name of his Son Jesus Christ; as they are (says he) God be praised in our Liturgy. — Add to these the Testimony of Jews, Mahometans, and Pagans. Besides me, there is one God. Is there any God besides me? yea, there is no God, I know not any. I am God, and there is *none else*. § *Isaiab.* Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. It is impossible the Number two can be applied to that which exists necessarily: *Mairn*. — God! there is no God but He; the living, the self-subsisting — He is the High, the Mighty: *Koran*. By *Plato* God is called the *One*. God is *One* Creator of all that is — God is like a perfect Sphere, without beginning or end. The *ETERNAL One*: *Bramah's Shastab*. God, if he be a perfect Being as He must be, can be but One, that all things may be in him. If there could be more Gods than One, every one would want what the other had: *Lactant*.

* It will be said, that these learned Persons were Trinitarians; agreed they were so. It is enough for my purpose that they have been forced to acknowledge the Truth. And it is very pleasant to observe learned Men building up with one Hand, and pulling down with the other; saying and unsaying, contradicting themselves, and exposing their own nakedness.

§ Whom should I rather believe concerning God, than God himself?

I shal

I shall here recite, for the Entertainment of my Readers, the Notion of the Trinity by several learned Men, to shew how they contradict, and clash against, each other.

One Rev. Person makes the three Persons of the Trinity to be mere external Relations of the one Substance of the Deity to Mankind, viz. Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; so that each Person makes a third of God, as Length, Breadth, and Thickneſs make a Cube: *Wallis*.—Some make the Persons to be eternal Modes of Subſiſtence, or internal Relations of the Subſtance of the Deity itſelf: *South*. Some maintain three diſtinct, unequal, eternal Beings; the firſt whereof is alone Self-exiſtent, and the Second and Third Subordinate: *Fowler*. Some maintain Three Diſtinct, eternal, equal Beings, whoſe Unity is partly Numerical, and partly Specifical. *Sherlock*.—Again, ſome make the Doctrine of the Trinity to conſiſt in Three diſtinct, eternal, perfectly equal Beings agreeing in a Specific Unity: *Braddock*.—That each Divine Perſon is an individual intelligent Agent: But as ſubſiſting in one undivided Subſtance; they are all together in that reſpect, but one undivided intelligent Agent. God is three Perſons---The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, are three Perſons; every one ſingly God, and altogether one God. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghoſt is God, and they are all three the one God: *Waterland*.—I believe that as there is one God, ſo this one God, is Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. This I confeſs, is a Myſtery, which I cannot poſſibly conceive, yet it is a Truth which I can eaſily believe. Yea, *therefore* it is ſo true that I can eaſily believe it, becauſe it is ſo high that I cannot poſſibly conceive it: *Biſhop Beveridge*.—A Triangle—a Trinity of ſomewhats.—*Bennet*.

Had theſe learned Perſons conſulted the New Teſtament, they would have all agreed in one God—one Lord—one Spirit. But they extracted a Trinity from their Brains (already reduced to a Caput-mortuum) as Spiders do Poiſon from their Bellies.

The following crabbed Terms, when dexterouſly managed, have performed Wonders: and the Church-Trinity cannot be ſupported without them; tho' not one of them is to be found in the Bible.—Triunity, Unitrinity, Perſonality, Eſſence, Subſtance, Ineity, Suppoſitality, Conſubſtantiality, Coeſſentiality, Inexiſtence, Hypoſtatiſ, Homooſiſ, Perſcity, Circuminceſſion, Innateſcibetity, Trinity, &c.

The

The Declaration of JESUS CHRIST.

AND call no Man your Father upon the Earth; for one is your Father which is in Heaven, neither be ye called Masters: for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are Brethren. Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with the Holy Angles. *Matth. xxiii. 9. 10. Mark, iii. 38.*

PRINCIPLES or ARTICLES of Christian Religion in the Words of Christ and his Apostles.

The Unity of God the first Article of all Religion.

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least Commandments, and shall teach Men so, he shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven. *Matth. v. 19.*”

“The first of all the Commandments is, Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord. That they might know Thee, the only true God. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth. God so loved the Word, that he gave his only begotten Son.” The words of Christ. “For there is One God, but God is One. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. One God and Father of all, who is above all.” *St. Paul.*

Whoever wants farther Scripture Proof, let him read Dr. Clarke's Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, and the Appeal and Defence, &c. Or if any one would see the Argument for the Unity of God, drawn from his necessary or Self-existence, urged in its full force, may find it in Dr. Samuel Clarke's Boyle's Lecture, Part first.

ARTICLE II.

Faith in Jesus Christ the Messiah, the first Article of Christian Religion.

The Birth of Christ was on this wise. His Mother Mary was found of Child of the Holy Ghost. And behold thou shalt conceive in thy Womb, and bring forth a Son, and call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David. A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. For God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Thou art Christ the Son of the living God. Jesus of Nazareth which was a Prophet mighty in Deed and Word, before God. Behold the Lamb

of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. We have found the Messias, which is being interpreted the Christ. The Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. For if ye believe not that I am he (the Messiah) ye shall die in your Sins. Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in Heaven, the same is my Brother, and Sister, and Mother. Repent ye, and believe the Gospel. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal Life. Jesus answered them, and said, my doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord; but he that doth *the will of my Father* which is in heaven. My meat is to do the will of him that *sent me*, and to finish his work. My Father of whom ye say that he is your God. This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And as they were eating Jesus took Bread, and blessed, and brake it and gave to the disciples, and said, Take eat, this is my body. And he took the Cup, and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this, for this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of Sins. And they crucified him. And when Jesus had cried with a loud Voice, he said, Father into thy Hands I commend my Spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the Ghost. And *Joseph* begged the body—and laid it in a sepulchre, where never man before was laid. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. I ascend unto *my Father*, and to your Father, and to *my God and your God*. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; the Spirit of Truth. All Power is *given* unto me in Heaven and Earth. Go ye and make Disciples of all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He was received up into Heaven, and sat on the right of God. The Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all the Holy Angels with him; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and then shall he reward every man according to his Works. The Righteous shall shine forth as the Son, in the Kingdom of their Father. GOSPEL.

Thou art my Son this Day have I begotten thee. Declared to be the Son of God with power. God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with Power; who went about doing good. And hath exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, to be a King and a Saviour. In all points tempted like as we are yet without Sin. And has put away Sin by the sacrifice of himself--having obtained eternal Redemption for us.

B

God

God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ who hath abolished Death, and hath brought Life and immortality to light by the Gospel.

Thus have I set before you in a few words the scripture Doctrine of our Saviour Jesus Christ: But your Faith is, I fear, very different. You are told, that Christ is the eternal God, or equal to God, and you greedily embrace these false Notions. When you go to the Lord's Supper, whom do you Remember? Who died for you? can you be so foolish as to believe that God died for you? What! God a sacrifice for his sinful Creatures, impossible! It is certainly irrational and unscriptural to commemorate Christ, who was crucified for us, under the character of supreme God. I pray God to open your Eyes, that you may see the Truth, as it is in Jesus.

To fear God and keep his Commandments, is the Summary of the old Testament; and to believe that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, is the Compendium of the New. Whosoever can prove his Obedience and Faith, by these two plain duties, fulfils the Law and the Gospel. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.

A R T I C L E II.

The Son which is the Word of the Father, *begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God; of one Substance with the Father*, took Man's Nature in the Womb of the blessed Virgin, of her Substance; so that *two, whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the God-head and Manhood, were joined together in one Person*, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ *very God and very Man*, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a Sacrifice not only for *original Guilt*, but also for actual sins of men.

This Article is evidently false, because it is a Contradiction. It is universally acknowledged by *all Men*, that Christ is neither self-existent, nor independent, and therefore cannot be *the very and eternal God*: and the Article overthrows itself in one Word, *Begotten*.

Now in the *first Article*, it being said, that, "in the Unity of this Godhead, there be three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," the plain meaning of this Part of the *second Article*, is this, that this one Person *Christ*, in whom were joined the whole and perfect Godhead, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, and the whole and perfect Manhood, the human Soul and Body, suffered, was dead and buried, to reconcile his *Father* to us; that is, the *Father* of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, joined together with the whole and perfect Manhood, in one Person. Here
thea

then I would ask, "Who, or what, is this Father of ——— ? This account of the eternal, unchangeable God, is too shocking to dwell upon. Was ever any thing more gross asserted, of the Deity, by *Hobbs*, *Spinoza*, or *Epicurus* * !

Observe ORTHODOXY upon this Article.

The Son, when he came into the World, glorified not himself, but his Father. And teaching his Disciples, saying, *My Father is greater than I: Athanasius*. That the Son, even as he is God, is less than the Father: Bp. *Bull*. The Father is greater; I know him, saith Christ, *for I am from him*. Christ is God, but of God: Bp. *Pearson*. O Son of David, have mercy upon us: *Litany*. Proofs of the inferiority of the Son would be infinite; for the most zealous Athanasians have confessed that the Son received his being from the Father; and he declared himself, that he is a Creature of the one great God and Father of all, who is the Fountain all of Being and all Existence.

A R T I C L E III.

Of the going down of Christ into Hell.

As Christ died for us and was buried: so also it is to be believed, that he went down into Hell.

That Christ died and was buried is very true. But that he went to the Devil, no Body will assert that believes the Gospel; because nothing like it is found there. Christ, that is, God and Man went down into Hell: If this article, as Bp. *Burnet* observes, is capable of three different Senses, all three, both literal and grammatical, and there is nothing in the Article itself to determine in which of the three it is to be understood: then it has no Sense at all.

That the latter Part of this Article is false, I call Christ himself to witness. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in *Paradise*.

A R T I C L E IV.

Of the Resurrection of CHRIST.

That Christ did truly rise again from Death, and took again his Body, with *Flesh, Bones, and all Things appertaining to the Perfection of Man's Nature, wherewith he ascended into Heaven*, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the last Day.

That Christ did truly rise again from Death, is a grand Truth: But that he sits at the right Hand of God in the *same* Body, St. Paul tells us is not true. 1 Cor. xv. 50. Now this I say, Brethren, that Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; neither Corruption inherit Incorruption. Again, Phil. iii, 21. Who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, or the Body of his Glory.

A R T I C L E V.

Of the HOLY GHOST.

The Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son, *is of one Substance, Majesty and Glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.*

A third eternal God proceeding from two eternal Gods, one of whom died, is a greater Curiosity than any in the British Museum.

The Church shall first confute this Article; and then I will bring Scripture to overthrow it.

Almighty God! grant that we—may daily be renewed *by thy Holy Spirit.* And take not *thy Holy Spirit* from us. Almighty and everlasting God!—*let thy Holy Spirit* ever be with them. O Father of Mercies, and God of all Comfort—strengthen him—with thy Grace and Holy Spirit. And that you will continually pray to God the Father, by the Mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, for the heavenly Assistance of the Holy Ghost. See the common Prayer Book.

I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God. Jesus returned in the Power of *the Spirit.* God giveth not the Spirit by Measure unto him. Ye shall receive Power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. The Love of God is shed abroad in your Hearts by the Holy Spirit. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God. The Holy Ghost. The Power of the Highest. The Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father. Because the Spirit is Truth. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. There is *one Spirit*,—one Lord,—One God and Father of all, who is above all.—He that hath an Ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

CHRISTIAN

CHRISTIAN ARTICLES.

L O V E. Article III.

A new Commandment I give unto you, That ye *Love* one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to another. This is my Commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater Love hath no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends. Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength : this is the first Commandment. And the second, Thou shalt *love* thy neighbour as thyself : there is none other Commandment greater than these. Let Love be without Dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly Love. And though I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity (*Love*) it profiteth me nothing. And walk in *Love*, as Christ, also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us. Whatsoever things are *lovely*. And this is his Commandment that we should believe on the Name of his Son *Jesus Christ*, and love one another, as he gave us Commandment. Beloved, let us love one another : for Love is of God ; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God ; for God is Love.

Christian Religion is Love ; and Love is the Perfection of a Christian.

T R U T H. Article IV.

And ye shall know the *Truth*, and the truth shall make you free. When the Spirit of Truth is come he will guide you into all Truth. To this End was I born, and for this Cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the *Truth*. Every one that is of the Truth, heareth my Voice. Who changeth the Truth of God into a Lye, and worshippeth and serveth the Creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen. Who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the Truth. Whatsoever things are *true*. From the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in *Truth* and Love. Turning to God from Idols, to serve the living and true God. These Things saith the Amen, the faithful and *true* Witness, the beginning of the Creation of God. Resisting the Truth, Men of corrupt Minds. They turn away their Ears from the *Truth*, and shall be turned unto Fables.

Buy the *Truth*, and sell it not : *Solomon*. *Truth* is the Companion of God : *Ph. Jud.* *Truth* is a sweet Thing. *Plut.* A
good

good Man loves the Truth, because it is the Truth: *Maim.* Of all the good Things in the World Truth is the best, and Falshood is the utmost boundary of all Evil: *Baf.* Pythagoras being asked, What it was that any Man could do like what God does, answered, speak the Truth.

ARTICLE VI.

Of the sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for Salvation.

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to Salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an Article of the Faith, or to be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation, &c.

A true Protestant Article this; but how contrary to the others?—The Bible is the Religion of Protestants.* Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal Life, and they are they which testify of me. John v. 29. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness. 2 Tim. iii. 16. This Article may be justly considered as the grand Foundation, on which the Church of England is founded. It had no right to exist at first but upon the glorious Privilege of Christians to search the Scriptures, and form their Faith and Practice upon the express Declarations of Christ and his Apostles, without any Regard to the greatest Authority upon Earth. Neither can the contrary be maintained without relapsing into the essential Principles of Popery. The very same Arguments, which justified our first Reformers, in departing from the Corruptions of the Church of Rome, will equally justify us in protesting against any of their Decrees, if they be found upon Examination, disagreeable to the Word of God. But tho' this Article appears highly rational, and worthy of a Christian Society, yet it deserved a Review upon account of its Catalogue of canonical Books, in the Number of which the Song of Solomon is included. But this, as it has been nicely examined by some learned Persons, should be excluded from

* How ought we then to value our Bibles, daily to read them, and search ourselves for those Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge: and how jealous should we be of trusting our Temporal and Eternal Happiness to the Judgment and conduct of others, who for the most Part, from imbibed Prejudices or worse Designs, represent the most ridiculous, chimerical, absurd, contradictory, and immoral Opinions, to be fundamental Articles of Christianity.

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the Number of Canonical Books. Let any unprejudiced Person read it with ordinary Attention, and he will naturally think it one of Solomon's love-Songs, that upon the Face of it has no more Relation to Christ and his Church, than a Pastoral of Theocritus, Virgil, or Pope. This Book is never cited in the New-Testament: whereas if it had referred to Christ and his Church, and the Apostles had entertained this Notion of it, 'tis really incredible that this should have happened; for it is well known that the Jews were deeply prejudiced against the Admission of the Gentiles into the Fold of the Church; and consequently the Apostles would have gladly endeavoured to convince them from this Song of Solomon, that the call of the Gentiles was signified by God in this allegorical Piece. Again, the Word, God, is not mentioned thro' the whole, which, in a supposed allegorical Description of Christ and his Church, could scarce have been conceived. But if any one desires farther Satisfaction, let him consult Mr. Whiston's Supplement to his Essay towards restoring the true Text of the Old Testament; and likewise a Dissertation on the Song of Solomon, with the original Text divided according to the Metre, and a Poetical Version. Printed for Millar, 1751.

If the Holy Scripture contains all Things necessary to Salvation, which is the solemn Determination of the Church itself, it seems very absurd and unreasonable, that the Professors of this Determination should pay so little regard to Scripture Doctrines, and should treat the plain simplicity of the Gospel of Christ with so much Contempt, and even Aversion, that if any Person openly defends the Unity of God in the literal and rational Sense, the grand Principle of natural and revealed Religion, he is necessarily cut off from all Hopes of Preferment in the Church, and will certainly meet with Difficulties and Discouragements, if not direct Persecution.

Who expelled Mr. *Whiston*? the churchmen of *Cambridge*. Who attempted to proscribe Dr. *Clarke*? the Churchmen of the Lower House of Convocation. Who took counsel against the Bishop of *Clogher*? the great churchmen of *Ireland*. Who Prosecuted Dr. *Carter* in the Ecclesiastical Court? the church-Officers of *Deal*, at the instigation, as it is said, of a Churchman of that Place. Who prosecuted Mr. *Emlyn* in *Ireland*, and Messieurs *Pierce*, *Withers* and *Hallet*, in *England*? The Dissenting Clergy, abetted by some great Churchmen* of the established Church. And who * * * * *

* *The Confessional*. The Author of which work deserves the Thanks of every Christian.

Hear

Hear the Word of the Lord.

He that hath my Word, let him speak my Word faithfully, What is the chaff to the Wheat? saith the Lord. Thou shalt worship no other God! for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a Jealous God. Thou therefore gird up thy Loins, and arise and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their Faces, lest I confound thee before them. Son of Man, I have made thee a Watchman unto the House of *Israel*; therefore hear the Word of my Mouth, and give them Warning from me.

Then said Jesus unto his Disciples, If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his Life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his Life for my sake shall find it. We are not as many which corrupt the Word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.

ARTICLE VIII.

The three Creeds, *Nice Creed*, *Athanasius's Creed*, and that which is commonly called the *Apostles Creed*, ought thoroughly to be received and believed, for they may be proved by most certain Warrants of Holy Scripture.

Perhaps enough has been said upon the Athanasian Creed in my first Attempt: were I challenged the World to produce one plain Text of Scripture to prove that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are the one God, or to be worshipped as the one God of Christians. But nothing like it in answer has been shewn. Thank God, the Scripture stands clear of such abominable Absurdities!

Nor can I, says a learned Writer†, subscribe to that part of the eighth Article, where it is said, that "the Athanasian Creed ought thoroughly to be received and believed, and that it may be proved by certain Warrants of holy Scripture;" for I think this Creed contradicts *itself*, *Scripture*, and *common Sense*. Nor those horrid Clauses, in it, in which all are condemned everlastingly, who do not believe this heap of Contradictions. These have been often noticed and complained of, but hitherto to no purpose. This Athanasian Doctrine, which hath been look'd upon, as the most sacred, important Article of the Christian faith; and the belief of it, as necessary to Salvation; and the Denial of it, as deserving of, and hath accordingly

† Letters, &c.

accordingly been punished with the most cruel, painful Death. I mean that absurd Doctrine, if nonsense and contradiction may be said to be Doctrine, "that there are three Persons in the Godhead; every one of whom is God, in the same sense, and yet there is but *one* God." If this be true, then any thing may be true, or false; or true and false at the same Time; and there could be no such thing as Knowledge and Reason, in the World. But for all, the Athanasian Trinity is still the *choak-pear* of christianity.

To multiply Creeds, is to multiply error. However the Creed I shall set before you, is *proved by most certain Warrant of holy Scripture*; and I hope will give no offence to any. I shall call it our Saviour's Creed. "And this is Life eternal, that they might know thee the *only* true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." John xvii, 3. That the only true God is the Father, and that Christ is the Messiah, I shall in few words demonstrate. O Father, *Lord of Heaven and Earth*. Our Father who art in Heaven. My Father, of whom ye say that he is your God. The will of God my Father: the Words of Christ.—To Us there is but One God the Father. God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: St. Paul.—It is amazing to me that those that call themselves Christians, neither believe Jesus Christ to be what he is, nor believe what he says. Remember, Behold, to obey is better than Sacrifice: and to hearken, than the fat of Rams. For Rebellion is the Devil. But I return to prove Christ the Messiah.

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David. We have found the Messiah, which is being interpreted the Christ. Jesus saith unto him, I that speak unto thee, am *he*. For Moses truly said, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; &c. I forbear multiplying Texts, because it has given offence*.

A R T I C L E IX.

"Original Sin is the fault or corruption, of the nature of every Man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam?"

* "What need (says Dr. Waterland to Dr. Clarke) for citing 300 Texts, wide of Purpose, to prove what no Body denies, namely a *Subordination*?"—I beg my Readers to observe that Dr. Waterland has in *one* word demolished the labours of his whole life, in allowing a Subordination, which is giving up the Point.

In every Person born into this World, deserveth God's Wrath and Damnation *!"

Shocking! was there ever any thing so wicked? I would not be the author of this and the 17th Article, for all the World.—To put a similar Case: My Father, before I was born, robbed an Orchard, stole an Apple, was discovered, and made satisfaction; yet nevertheless I must be hanged for it.—Adam disobeyed God, was punished for his Sin, and turned out of Paradise before he had a Child, and yet all his Sons and Daughters to the latest Posterity must go to the Devil for his Transgression. Is this Justice?—Adam has indeed left us a Legacy (thank him) Death, Disease, and Pain. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Thanks be to God, which giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ

There is another kind of original Sin co-eval with the former, and equally true: but with difference, for as in the first, the Guilt of one is laid to all; so in this the faults of all are laid to one: I mean, the vulgar notion of fathering all our crimes on the Devil. If murder is committed, the Devil is the Principal. If a Man hangs himself the Devil fixes the Cord, &c. Alas! poor Devil. Of all Sins that is called *original* in this Article, is the most Infernal.

How Adam's eating the forbidden fruit, should be the sin, or fault, of his posterity; who were not in being, when he committed that sin; is impossible to conceive. *Sin* is a personal thing; not transferable, from one to another. The Sin any more than the Pain of one man cannot be the Sin of another, by imputation, or any other way, unless this man can become that man, and that man this man. *Sin is the Transgression of the Law.* And by this a man becomes guilty; not by the imputation of the transgression of the Law. Besides that, to charge a Person with the Guilt of any Sin, committed by another, in which he had no Hand at all, and to which he was not in the least accessory, in any respect, (which was the case of Adam's Posterity, with regard to this *original Sin*) is plainly a false Charge, and argues Injustice, or Ignorance.

But it may be said, that by *Birth-Sin*, or fault, in this Article is meant, not guilt, but moral defect, moral infection, or corruption.—Let it then be understood, in this sense, and let such corruption be here supposed; yet is it not inconsistent with any right notion which we can form of Justice,

* Was the Devil ever painted in such horrid Colours, as the one great good God is in this and some others of the 39 Articles?

or righteousness, to say, as it is said, in the following part of this *Article*, that this Corruption, which is not our Guilt, but our unhappiness “in every Person born into the World, deserveth God’s Wrath and Damnation?” Let us reflect a moment upon the horrid Cruelty and more than Devilish Barbarity implied in this dreadful *Article*: all Children born into the World deserve God’s wrath and Damnation upon account of a corruption of Nature derived from Adam. The true Idea of God’s wrath and Damnation, according to the known sense of the compilers, necessarily signifies most amazing Torments in Hell-fire, millions and millions and millions of Ages, without any Possibility of Release as being coeternal with the Creator himself: And all this for being born into the World and having such a Nature as the Almighty thought fit to bestow upon them, and consequently for no Fault of their own, or if any Fault was committed, it was done thousands of Years before they were born. If the Bible contained such an infinitely absurd and most cruel Doctrine, it would be a demonstration, that it never came from the God of Truth, and merciful Father of all rational Beings;—even the Authority of Miracles, or an Angel from Heaven, would be insufficient to establish the belief of it in the minds of thinking Persons. But to our infinite Satisfaction, the Scripture rightly interpreted, is a Stranger to this infernal Doctrine. I think, the truth is, that Adam’s eating of the forbidden Fruit, is neither the Guilt, nor the Corruption of *every one*, or any one, that naturally is ingendered of his offspring. Man is born like a wild Ass’s Colt. A new born Infant has no more notion of moral good and evil; and therefore no more capable of moral pravity or corruption, while in that state of Infancy, than a *wild Ass’s Colt*. Moreover, the Body is not a subject, capable of moral Corruption. This can exist only in the Soul, which is intelligent and conscious; and therefore, cannot be propagated from Father to Son by Generation.

The next Clause in this *Article*, is, I think repugnant to the whole tenor of Scripture, “And this infection of nature doth remain; yea, even in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh is not subject to the Law of God.”—Now I cannot reconcile this with the following Texts of Scripture. They that are Christ’s, have crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts. Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him; that the Body of Sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve Sin; for he that is dead, is freed from Sin. But I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection.

I hasten to give this *Article* a Total overthrow, in the Words of our Saviour.

Suffer little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little Child, shall in no wise enter therein. Luke xviii, 16, 17, Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should Perish. Matth. xviii. 14.

ARTICLE X. Of Free-Will.

“The condition of Man after the Fall of *Adam*, is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural Strength and good Works to Faith and calling upon God: Wherefore we have no Power to do good Works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the Grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good Will, and working with us when we have that good Will.”

Being ignorant of Grammar; all I make of this Article is, that we are *Free*, only that we are not Free. We move so long as we are acted upon, and so does a Wind-Mill. This is certain, that without Freedom of Will, there can be no Religion, no Virtue, or Vice, no Reward, or Punishment. The Promises and Threatnings of the Gospel are of no use: nor exhortations to Repentance of any service.

As to the Liberty of human Actions, I leave every one to prove it to themselves. We have a Power to change, from better to worse; or from worse to better. We can make a thousand Free Motions, we can rise, or if we please, sit still.—Up and try.—It is a notion of all Enthusiasts, especially the *Methodists*, that we can do nothing of ourselves; but that all the Good we do, is done by the Spirit of God: and all the Evil by the Devil. It seems the Holy Spirit Tugs at one Hand, and the Devil at the other, and he has got the *right*.

I come now to demolish this Article in the Words of Christ and his Apostles.

If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments. Repent and believe the Gospel. Take heed what you hear, Take heed therefore how ye hear. But he said, yea, rather blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it. Take heed therefore that the Light which is in thee be not Darkness. So is he that layeth up Treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.—Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is Right? Strive to enter in at the strait Gate. And whosoever doth not bear his Cross, and come after me, cannot be my Disciple. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal Life, and they are they which testify of me. If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed.

indeed. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Whosoever shall do the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. Come unto me, all ye that Labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest: GOSPEL.——These—searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so. If thou continue in his goodness; otherwise, thou shalt be cut off. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Awake to Righteousness and Sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame. Watch ye, stand fast in the Faith, quit yourselves like Men; be strong. Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not intangled again in the Yoke of Bondage. But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. Give diligence to make your calling and Election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall. But grow in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He that doth Good, is of God; but he that doeth Evil, hath not seen God: Epistles of PAUL, &c.

Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn unto you. When the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedness, &c. Behold, the Fear of the Lord that is *Freedom*, and to depart from evil, is *True Liberty*. I will walk at Liberty for I seek thy Commandments. Wash and be clean. Repent and be forgiven. You have a Soul that is absolutely *Free*. You were not created a Sinner, nor do you commit whoredom by Chance: *Cyril*. The Fault lies in him who chooses to do the thing, God is not to blame: *Max. Tyr.*

ARTICLE XI.

Of the Justification of Man.

“We are accounted Righteous before God, only for the Merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own Works or deservings. Wherefore, *that we are justified by Faith only*, is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very Comfort.”

This Article, is not only an expresse contradiction to scripture; but a most dangerous deceit. For whoever builds his Salvation on *Faith only*, will I fear never reach Heaven. 'Tis our good Works, that will save us. We must imitate the moral Perfections of the Deity. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall

shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: but he that *doth* the will of my Father which is in Heaven. I tell you, I know not whence you are; depart from me all ye workers of Iniquity. Blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it. Little Children let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness, is righteous. Not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the *Doers* of the Law shall be justified. Whatsoever a Man soweth that shall he also reap. Him that sinneth against me, saith God, will I blot out of my Book, Blessed are they that *do* his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life.

The Gospel stands firm upon *this* Foundation, *Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ, depart from Iniquity*; and any other Foundation, a man can possibly build upon, will fail him as the loose Sand; yet nevertheless suffer themselves to be imposed upon with so strange a delusion, as to reconcile the continuance of some sinful Practice or other, with the hope of Salvation; in reliance, either upon the *Goodness of God*, or upon the MERITS OF CHRIST, or upon *Intercession of Saints*, or upon the *Absolutions of the Priest*, or upon the *Sacraments of the Church*, or upon notions of unconditionate *Predestination*, or upon a *Death Bed Repentance*, or upon the *Strength or Righteousness of their Faith*, in believing things they understand nothing of, and in adhering zealously to certain *Parties of Men*. Which last, is perhaps of all others the *greatest* and most *extensive* Delusion: *Clarke.*

A R T I C L E XIII.

Of Works before Justification.

“ Works done before the Grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God; — *we doubt not but they have the Nature of Sin.*”

That is, if a man, before he is a Christian; should out of Love and Compassion, feed the Hungry, cloath the Naked, and succour the Distressed; in a Word, Love his Neighbour as himself: He is a Sinner in the sight of God; and must do so no more. Our Saviour in his Story of the good Samaritan has plucked this Article up by the Roots, and at the conclusion says, *Go, and do thou likewise.* What! go thou, and do that, which hath in it the Nature of Sin! *Cornelius* the Roman Centurion is said to be a devout Man; and one that feared God, with all his House; and gave much Alms to the People; and prayed to God alway. Now, this was his Character, before he had ever heard the Gospel preached; while he was a stranger

Stranger to the *Grace of Christ*: and yet it is said, his Prayers and his Alms were come up, for a Memorial, before God.

Moreover, according to this Article, no Man before *the Grace of God*, can do any thing to procure that *Grace*, or make himself meet for it, unless he can procure it by sinning against God. — So that all Application; all *Prayer*, to the God of all *Grace*, by Man, in this State, that is, *before the Grace of God*, is plainly discouraged by this *Article*. According to it, all such Application would be not only altogether unsuccessful, but likewise *sinful*, in them.

A R T I C L E XVII.

Of Predestination and Election*.

“ Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the Foundations of the World were laid, he hath

* The Scripture notion of Predestination is nothing more than God's Purpose to call the Gentiles or Heathens, as well as the Jews, to the knowledge of the Gospel; more particularly, St. Paul's 9th Chapter of his Epistle to the Romans was intended to prove that it was agreeable to the usual methods of God's Providential Dispensations to bestow extraordinary Favours or external Privileges upon some People, and not grant the same to other People; and that as the Jews in general would not receive the Gospel, when it was offered to them in the most advantageous manner, because the Messiah did not appear with a Crown upon his Head; so they were justly cut off from being the People of God; and the Gentiles, who readily closed in with the gracious offers of Salvation, were elected into the Church. But notwithstanding their Election, or their being taken into the Church, they were not elected to eternal Life unless they improved the Favour of Election to the grand Purpose of Holiness, which must depend upon their own endeavours, and a free Use of the glorious means put into their Power, as St. Paul has particularly observed ch. xi. of this Epistle; and which Doctrine indeed is inculcated through all his Epistles, and those of the other Apostles. This plain State of the Case cuts up by the Roots the horrid Doctrine of Predestination, as set forth in modern Articles. No Nation under Heaven hath received greater Blessings from God, than we. We have had the Gospel in our Hands above 200 Years: Have we lived agreeable to it? Have we made a suitable return of Gratitude for it? Do we yet believe it, so

as

hath constantly Decreed, by his Counsel secret to us, to deliver from Curse and Damnation, those whom he hath chosen in *Christ* out of Mankind, and to bring them, by *Christ*, to everlasting Salvation, as Vessels made to honour, &c."

Here *Adam* and all his Posterity, are considered as *under Curse and Damnation*, when God made this Decree; and therefore as guilty, in his sight, as having transgressed his Law; for nothing but Guilt can subject a moral Agent to Curse and Damnation. Not on account of *actual*, but *original Sin*, or the *Sin of Adam*, according to the *ninth Article*. For no Man could be guilty of *actual Sin*, or in his own Person transgress the Law of God, before he had a Being, or before he was capable of sinning. Now what a shocking representation have we here, set before us, of the Divine Being! God, beholding the whole human Race lying in Guilt, and under eternal curse and Damnation; all in the same helpless, miserable, compassionate State; into which they were brought, by a meer arbitrary, sovereign Act of his Will, decreed to deliver some, a certain determinate Number of them, from this State, and to bring them by *Christ* unto everlasting Salvation; having no Mercy or Compassion on the rest; but leaving them to perish eternally, without Remedy, without any possibility of being delivered from that Curse and Damnation, to which he had subjected them. If God decreed to deliver only some, *from Curse and Damnation*, even those *whom he hath chosen in Christ out of Mankind*; then the rest are left, under *Curse and Damnation*. They are left to perish for ever, without any help, or Remedy. They are passed by, they are rejected, that is, reprobated.

To represent God, as having created rational Beings, capable of Happiness and Misery; and immediately, upon their coming into Being, subjecting them to guilt, to Curse and *Damnation*, by an arbitrary Act of his Will; and then leaving them in

as to influence our Practice? I fear we do not. If so, may not God very justly reject Us, and dash us in Pieces, as a Potter does a faulty Vessel?

The Idea given of God in this Article, is really shocking; representing him as making some of Mankind happy, and others eternally miserable, without any Reason, only because he takes pleasure in the Ruin of countless Numbers. A fine Picture this of the *only* good Being in the Universe. The *Pope* advances his Favourites to the highest Dignities in the Popedom; and those that offend him, he sends to the Inquisition to be roasted. Which is the greatest Tyrant, God or the Pope?

In this miserable condition, not having Mercy or Compassion, on the Work of his Hands; nay, inflicting on them, everlasting Punishment; for what was absolutely, and ever out of their Power to avoid; is to represent him as——as what he is not. It is demonstrable, from *Reason*, that the one, only, eternal, necessary, self-existent, intelligent *Being*, is *good* and *benevolent*: And such, he manifests himself to be, in his government of this World, and his Providence towards Mankind. His tender Mercies are over all his Works. He taketh care of, and provideth for, the Children of Men, as a tender Parent. *The Earth is full of his Goodness. Yea, he is kind, even to the unthankful, and to the Evil.* He bears long with wicked and ungodly Men, that they may Repent of their Sins, and escape the Punishment due to them.

As the Doctrine contained in this *Article*, is contrary to what *Reason* and Experience teach us of God; so it is to the whole Tenour of the *sacred Scriptures*. Herein we are assured that *God hath no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked; and that he is not willing that any should Perish, but that all should come to Repentance.* Therefore he sent his Son, to be the *Saviour of Mankind*, to be a *Propitiation* for the Sins of the whole World. For *God is no respecter of Persons. Christ tasted Death for every Man.* Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord, shall be saved. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy House. The Precepts and Exhortations, the Declarations and Promises of the Gospel, are general. They relate, or belong, not to a certain Number, selected out of Mankind; but to all Men alike. Mercy and forgiveness is preached, through Christ, to all that repent, and he invites all, that labour, and are heavy laden, to *come unto him*, that they may find *Rest* to their Souls; and promises, that he will, in no wise, cast out any one, that cometh to him. He assures us, that our heavenly Father will give his holy Spirit to them who ask him, who giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not.

Again, this *Article* contradicts some others of the Articles. If God purposed to bring, only some, out of Mankind by *Christ*, to everlasting Salvation; then this plainly follows, that *Christ* is the Redeemer, or Saviour only of those, who were chosen out of Mankind. Which directly contradicts the 28th Article, where it is said, that “the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is a Sacrament of our Redemption, by *Christ’s Death*,” for the meaning here, cannot be, the Redemption of us the *Elect*, but of us all: And the 25th, where we are told, that “the Sacraments are effectual Signs of Grace, and good will towards us;” that is, *us all*: And the 2d article, where *Christ* is said to be, “a Sacrifice not only for *original*, but also for all *actual* Sins of Men;” and to mention no more, the 31st, where the offering of *Christ* is said, to be, “that perfect Redemption, Propitiation,

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and

and Satisfaction for all the *Sins of the whole World*, both *original* and *actual*."

Suppose one, who maintains this Doctrine, should address himself to an irreligious, wicked Man, who knows what his opinion is, and should use all the Arguments that he can think of, to this purpose; might not this other set them all aside, and wholly evade the Force of them, by some such answer as this?

"According to this Doctrine of your's, my everlasting state is unalterably fixed by the Decree of God, what sense is there then, in your persuading me to take care of my Soul, and secure my everlasting Happiness? Can I reverse, or make void the *Decree of Heaven*? Can I resist Almighty Power*?"

It is very curious to observe the Tricks and Inventions of Men. In the 9th *Article* it is said, every Person born into this World deserveth God's Wrath and Damnation. Go on to the 11th *Article*, and the *Merits* of Christ are sufficient to save all without exception. Proceed to the 17th *Article*, and you will find that God made a part only of Mankind to be saved. Turn back to the Athanasian Creed, and see all eternally damned that do not keep it whole and undefiled, and believe Blasphemies, Contradictions, &c.—Despair not, an expedient is still to be found: See the good Divine appear with a Cordial in his Hand, and Absolution dropping from his Lips—everlasting Happiness is secured! and who can doubt it?

God hath told us that he made *all* men to be saved. And the Way is this. Strive to live in universal Obedience to his righteous Commands, we must work out our own Salvation; he has given us Power to do it, and super-added the assistance of the Gospel: and when we have done our best, then we may rely upon his Mercy, and the Merits of Christ, and we are safe. There is no other possible way to Heaven. *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments.* Mat. xix, 17.

I have taken the following pretty Paragraph from a Presbyterian Sermon, which I think applicable to this and some of the foregoing *Articles*.

"Should any therefore, from mistaken or misapplied Texts of Scripture, infer Doctrines destructive of this divine Perfection, (goodness) we are justified in immediately rejecting them; though we may not understand the Scriptures sufficiently to account for these Texts, and give their true Interpretation. Have some therefore endeavoured to prove by Scripture Testimonies, that God made the greater Part of Mankind, with an original Intention of making them miserable, and that by an *unconditional* and *unchangeable Decree* he determined to everlasting Torments—That

* Letters, &c.

he mocks the greater part of those acquainted with the Gospel with offers of Blessedness, which he intends they shall not enjoy, and which is not in their power to accept ; and yet will make their Condemnation and Misery the heavier for not accepting them—that to have a pretence for condemning them to everlasting Torments, he takes advantage of a Sin committed by the first Parents of their Race, long before they Existed, and to which they could no way concur ; and imputes to them the *Faults* of their Constitutions, though they are *his* Creatures, and could not make themselves. Or have they taught that God dooms non-elect Infants (a Phrase to which the Scripture is a Stranger) to endless misery, and thus punishes them for descending from Parents, from whom he himself appointed that they should descend—that he appoints them to be born blind, and then damns them for not seeing clearly. That he sends their Souls into corrupted Bodies, which disable them from doing any thing morally good, and yet requires them to become perfectly good and holy—that he refuses them sufficient assistance for governing their natural Inclinations, and punishes them for yielding to impulses which they could not resist—that he excludes the greater Part of Mankind from eternal Life, for not believing in Christ ; of whom they have not heard, or to the proofs of whose divine Mission they are Strangers—And that he requires Perfection from all whom yet he hath made incapable of yielding even sincere Obedience ; and in short, as selecting a few without any regard to their Temper and Conduct, to be made for ever Happy by him, and with as little Reason dooming the rest by countless Millions to everlasting Misery, though by nature alike his Children. Have any wrested obscure passages of Scripture to countenance these, or such like Doctrines, which are not merely inconsistent with infinite Good, but with all Justice, and with any degree of Goodness, with the Benevolence of a truly good Man ; we are justified in immediately rejecting such Doctrines, notwithstanding their being covered with some Passages, violently torn from the Scripture : being certain that these Texts must be misrepresented, and misapplied :” *Amory.*

“ —*False and mistaken Principles of Religion.* As this for one ; That God does not sincerely desire the Salvation of Men, but hath from all eternity effectually barred the greatest part of Mankind from all possibility of attaining that Happiness which he offers to them ! and every one hath cause to fear that he may be in that number. This were a melancholy consideration indeed, if it were true ; but there is no ground either from Reason or Scripture to entertain any such thought of God, our *Destruction is of ourselves* ; and no Man shall be ruined by any Decree of God, who does not ruin himself by his own fault :” *Tillotson.*

A R T I C L E XVIII.

Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ:

In this Article, the *Clerical*, cursing, style is really shocking. "They, also are to be accursed that presume to say, that every Man shall be saved, by the Law or Sect, which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the Light of Nature." And so is the consequence, fairly deducible from what is here asserted. For does not St. *Peter* presume to say this? Of a Truth I perceive, that God is no respecter of Persons. But in every Nation, he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him.

A R T I C L E XIX.

Of the Church.

This Nineteenth *Article* is of the visible Church of Christ, which is there defined to be, "a Congregation of faithful Men, in the which, the pure Word of God, is preached and the Sacraments be duly administered, according to *Christ's* Ordinance, in all those things, that are requisite to the same."

This excepting that it seems to exclude those of our fellow Christians, who go under the denomination of *Quakers*, and to imply that a Congregation of such, met together, to worship God, is not a *Christian Church*, or any part of the Church of Christ; this I say, may be a good Definition of a particular Christian Church, met together in one Place, for religious Worship. Such, I suppose, was the Church in Nymphas's House, and in Philemon's House; such were the Churches of Asia, and there are thousands of such Churches, or Congregations, in Great Britain.—But *THE Church of Christ* is but one, one Body under one Head, of which there never was, a congregation, since Christ's Ascension, unless it was at *Jerusalem*; nor ever will be, till the Judgment of the great Day. Thus it is spoken of, in the New Testament. For the Husband is the Head of the Wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church, and he is the Saviour of the Body: Therefore as the Church is subject to Christ, so—I speak concerning Christ and the Church—And in many other Places.

A R T I C L E

ARTICLE XX.

Of the Authority of the Church.

The next Article is, *of the Power of the Church*. One can hardly conceive, what a charming sound, these words *the Power, or Authority of the Church* have, in the Ears of some of the Clergy. It inspires them with lofty thoughts, and gives them a Stately air. Nay some, while they have been writing on this subject, *the Power of the Church*, seem to have had their heads grown Giddy, and their Senses not a little affected with the thoughts of it, for the Time. As the Term *Church* has been often used, by party writers in a vague and indeterminate sense, 'tis highly proper to fix the true Idea of it, when the Power of the Church is the point in Question, and 'tis maintained that the Church hath power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and Authority in Controversies of Faith. If by *Church* in this Article be meant the Clergy in distinction from the People, it expressly contradicts the former Article, where the visible Church of Christ is defined to be a Congregation of faithful Men, and consequently, according to this definition, the People are entitled to the Power here claimed as well as the Clergy; which sense, it may be justly questioned, whether the Compilers of the Articles intended to establish. But if we consult the New-Testament, there we may easily learn the true notion of Church: All those who were converted to the Faith of Christ, are called the Church. This undeniably appears from the Acts of the Apostles, and from the Salutations of Saint Paul in most of his Epistles, which are sometimes directed to the Saints, the faithful in Christ Jesus, the Church or Churches in such a City or Country, and sometimes to a particular Family under the name of Church; all which expressions were evidently intended to denote Believers in Christ, whether Teachers or People. This is the true and genuine notion of the word Church, taken from the express Declarations of the New-Testament. But whatever is meant by the word Church in this Article, drawn up by fallible men, there is a Power ascribed to it, inconsistent with the Authority of Christ, and likewise with the latter part of this very Article. To say, that the Church hath Power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, is to make the *Body* the *Head*; for such a Power can belong only to the *Head*, which is Christ. For to decree *Rites or Ceremonies*, and to impose the observation of them, in the Christian worship of God, is to make *Laws and Ordinances*, in the Church of Christ. And whoever do exercise, or claim such Authority, over their fellow Christians, they are so far Anti-Christian.

They

They are not subject to *Christ*: As the Apostle says the Church is; but inroach upon his Province; and usurp that Authority which belongs to him only. *The Church of Christ* is the kingdom of *Christ*. And it is an absolute Kingdom. He alone is Head or King of the *Church*. He is the sole Legislator in it. *Christ* instituted two Rites, in his *Church*. And who hath Power to institute a Third? Let them, who lay claim to such a Power, produce their Commission. Let them make good their claim, and prove it; not from one, or two Texts of Scripture of doubtful interpretation, or misapplied; but from such as are clear, express, and full to the purpose. For this, in the consequences of it, is a matter of very great importance to the *Christian Church*. If such a Power be allowed, where shall we fix the bounds of it? To what number of Rites and Ceremonies, shall it be limited? Or is it to be boundless? What a multitude of Ceremonies, hath the *Church of Rome* introduced into the Worship of God! And the use and observation of them all, is what they can justify, upon this Principle, that the Church hath Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies — And as to matters of Faith, if any authority be left to the Church in these, it must either imply a Power to add new Articles of Faith, or else to give the true Interpretation of the Scripture Rule of Faith, and to enforce it. The former is expressly contrary to the solemn Determination of the sacred Writers, and particularly to St. Paul, who has pronounced an Anathema or Curse upon those, who presume to make any alteration in the Gospel of *Christ*. As to the latter, it amounts to just nothing, or nothing to the purpose. For who shall judge, whether the Interpretation be right or not? Whether it gives the true sense of Scripture or not? If the Church, or the imposing Power, is to judge of this, we have then an implicit Faith in the Church established: an essential Principle of Popery, the very foundation on which the enormous authority of the Church of Rome was raised, and on which it is still supported. If those over whom the Church claims this authority, are to judge in the Case, then this authority is reduced to nothing. And indeed the latter Part of this Article quite destroys that Authority which is given to the Church, in the former part of it. Let any one define if he can, what Power the Church hath to decree Rites or Ceremonies; or what authority, in matters of Faith, if it be not lawful, as it is said in the latter part, to ordain any Thing, that is contrary to God's Word written; neither so to expound one place of Scripture, that it may be repugnant to another, and that, as it ought not to decree any Thing that is against Holy Writ, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any Thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation.

ARTICLE XXVI.

" Of the unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the Effect of the Sacraments.

Although, in the visible *Church*, the Evil be mingled with the Good, and sometimes the Evil have the chief Authority, in the ministration of the *Word* and *Sacraments*; yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in *Christ's*; and do minister by his Commission, and Authority, we may use their Ministry, both in hearing the *Word of God*, and in receiving the *Sacraments*, &c.

" This seems to me such strange Doctrine; that I can never give my assent to it. How can it be conceived, that the Evil, who, by their wicked Lives, and bad examples, corrupt mens Manners, and propagate Vice and Irreligion, in the World; and in so doing, are the *Servants of the Devil*; how can it be conceived, I say, that such men, while they continue such, have an *Authority* and *Commission* from *Christ*; whom God sent into the World, to bless men, in turning them from their iniquities, — to *minister in holy Things*? The ministration of such men is, really, a Profanation of the sacred ordinances of Religion, and surely, it cannot be, in the name and by the Authority of *Christ*, that they profane the Institutions of *Christ*. And whereas it is said, " we may use their ministry, both in hearing the *Word of God*, and in receiving the *Sacraments*," I should choose, for my own part, to attend on the Ministry of a Lay-Preacher, who is a good, pious Man; than of a wicked Man, though the Hands of the two Arch-Bishops had been laid on his head. *Letters, &c.*

ARTICLE XXVII.

BAPTISM.

Baptism is not only a Sign or Profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not Christened: but it is also a Sign of Regeneration, or new Birth, whereby, as by an Instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly, are grafted into the Church: the promises of the forgiveness of Sin, and of our adoption to be the Sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly Signed and Sealed: Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased, by virtue of Prayer unto God. The Baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the Institution of Christ.*

* Of Infant Baptism the New-Testament says nothing.

In order to illustrate this Article permit, me to add,

We call upon thee for *this Infant*, that he coming to thy holy Baptism, may receive remission of *his Sins* by spiritual Regeneration. Christ exhorteth all men to follow their INNOCENCY: To release him of *his Sins*, to sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, to give him the Kingdom of Heaven and everlasting Life.—My Baptism, wherein I was made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Common Prayer Book.

The Gospel Account of Baptism.

And were Baptized of him (John) in Jordan, confessing their Sins. I indeed Baptize you with Water unto Repentance. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be Baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be Baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? and Jesus answering, said unto him, suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all Righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus when he was Baptized, went up straightway out of the Water: and lo, the Heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a Dove, and lighting upon him. And lo, a Voice from Heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He that believeth and is Baptized, shall be saved.

Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins. See, here is Water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine Heart thou mayst. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.—And he baptized him.—*We are buried with Christ by Baptism into Death, that like as Christ was raised up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of Life. Baptism, doth also now save us, not the putting away of the Filth of the Flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.*

The Title of this *Article*, is, of Baptism: which is thus defined. "*Baptism is a sign of Regeneration, or new Birth; whereby as by an Instrument, Faith is confirmed and Grace increased, that is, in the Person baptized; for no other sense, I think, can be put upon the Words, "By virtue of Prayer to God."*

This Definition takes in *Infant Baptism*, as well as adult. Accordingly, it is said, in the very next Words, that "the Baptism

Baptism of young Children," that is of Infants, as appears from the practice of the *Church of England*, is in any wise to be retained, in the *Church*; as most agreeable with the *Institutions of Christ*." Now, it is evident, and what all will allow, that an Infant, a Child of a Week, or a Month, or twelve Months old, hath not any notion of moral good or evil; or any Power of self-determination, upon rational Motives. And therefore, is a subject, utterly incapable of having *Faith* or *Grace*; that is, any virtuous or religious disposition, wrought in, or communicated to it. — I cannot therefore honestly acknowledge this Proposition; that, "by *Baptism*, as by an Instrument, *Faith* is confirmed, and *Grace* increased," in Infants, to be agreeable to the Word of God.

Moreover, to say, that *Grace* is increased, in Infants, by *Baptism*, implies, that they had *Grace* before *Baptism*; which seems (if by *Grace*, is meant any religious, or morally good, disposition of mind) to contradict the *ninth* Article, of original, or Birth-Sin; which is there said to be *the Fault, or Corruption, of the Nature of every Man; that naturally is engendred of the offspring of Adam*: and the *thirteenth* Article, of *Works done before the Grace of Christ*.

Baptism seems to me, to be no more than an *initiating Rite*. If a Jew, Turk, or Pagan is willing to embrace Christianity, it is fit he should be Baptized. But it does not seem necessary to baptize the Children of christian Parents*, either Infants or Adults. However I do not condemn the Practice. It is remarkable that the Acts of the Apostles contain an History of the first Propagation of Christianity for 30 Years immediately succeeding Christ's Ascension into Heaven; and during all this Time we have no account of any Children born of Christian Parents being baptized, either Infants or Adult: From whence it seems propable that Baptism was originally intended for Converts only, or those that were profelyted from another Religion, whether Jews or Heathens. But I determine nothing positive upon this external Rite.

A R T I C L E XXVIII.

The next *Article*, is of the Lord's Supper. And the Reason of my taking notice of it, is in order to introduce some Passages from the Communion service; which seem to me to require a review.

* For if the Fruit be holy, the lump is also *holy*; and if the Root be holy, so are the Branches. Rom. xi. 16.

“ The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the Love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another : but the Bread which we break, is a partaking of the Body of Christ :—and likewise the Cup of Blessing, is a partaking of the Blood of Christ—The most comfortable sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ—whereby *alone* we obtain Remission of our Sins, and are made partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven*. My duty is to exhort you,—to consider the dignity of that holy *mystery*, and the great peril of the unworthy receiving thereof—for otherwise the receiving of the holy Communion doth nothing else but increase your Damnation. Jesus Christ hath instituted and ordained holy *mysteries*, as pledges of his Love. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the Flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his Blood.—The Body and Blood of Christ, which are *verily* and *indeed* taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.”

Institution by our Saviour.

And as they were eating, Jesus took Bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave it to the Disciples, and said, take, eat. This is my Body. And he took the Cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it : for this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the Remission of Sins. Matth. 25, 26, 27, 28. And as they did eat, Jesus took Bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, take, eat, this is my Body. And he took the Cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them : and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many. Mark xiv. 22, 23, 24. And he took Bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it unto them, saying, 'This is my Body, which is given for you : This do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the Cup after Supper, saying, This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood, which is shed for you. Luke xxii. 19, 20. See St. Paul's account, 1 Cor. xi. 23, &c.

I have here set before you our Lord's own account of his Supper. And I think it will be found a safer Guide, than all the Weekly Preparations, that ever were wrote. You will find nothing in this account of Mystery, Consecration, Preparation, Benefits ; nor of receiving it from a regular Priest. And if the Corinthians had behaved with decency, we had never heard of unworthy Receiving ; but they eat and drank and debauched themselves, which brought them into Disorder, which our Translators call Damnation.

* Haste ye, O ye Ministers of the Church—Run ye even to the Gallows, with the Sacrament in your Hands, and give the Murderer a safe Passport to the Kingdom of Heaven.

ARTICLE

A R T I C L E XXXVI.

Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers.

“ The Book of Consecration of Arch Bishops and Bishops, and ordering of Priests and Deacons, &c. hath nothing in it that of itself is superstitious and ungodly.”

It will be proper to examine the Contents of this Book, and compare them with Scripture, rationally interpreted, in order to be fully satisfied of the truth of this Article. I. In the Form of ordering Priests, we find this Passage; “ Receive the Holy Ghost, for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee, by the Imposition of our Hands. Whose Sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose Sins thou dost retain, they are retained.” That we may form an exact notion of the Power every Priest is supposed by the Church to be invested with by the Bishop's Imposition of Hands, and by virtue of this extraordinary Form, we need only have Recourse to the Office of the Visitation of the sick; upon the sick Person's confessing, and desiring Absolution; neither is it implied that the Wickedness of his past Life is any Bar to the validity of his Absolution, the Priest is directed to pronounce, as from the mouth of Almighty God, this solemn Sentence of Remission: “ By the Authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy Sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

The Notion of such a Power in the Clergy, if firmly believed and universally entertained, would give them an absolute Dominion over the Fortunes, and Lives, of the Laity. What would not any considerate Person, who had a value for his Soul, give or do to obtain the favour of one, whom he thought had Power to let him into, or shut him out of Heaven; to fix his state of Happiness or misery in the future World? The acknowledged Claim of this more than kingly Power, raised the Pope of Rome, from whom all Clergymen, who assume it, must own it derived, to an enormous height of Wealth and Greatness; so that at last in the most corrupted Ages of the Church, he demanded Homage of all secular Princes, and declared himself Prince of all the Kings of the Earth: And what is very astonishing, the Kings of Europe suffered themselves to be imposed upon by this exorbitant Pretension. But blessed be God, genuine Scripture Christianity has not put it into the Power of any Mortals upon Earth to forgive, or retain the Sins of their Fellow-Creatures. God Almighty by Christ and his Apostles, has plainly fixed the Terms and Con-

ditions of our Forgiveness, which do not depend upon the Will and Pleasure of any Priest, or Number of Priests.

As all exorbitant Powers in the Church of Christ must, some way or other, in appearance at least, be derived from Scripture; so in the present Case our Saviour's solemn Words delivered to his Apostles after his Resurrection, (John xx. 22, 23.) are the grand support of this wonderful Pretension. But nothing can be more unreasonable than to argue from extraordinary Powers given to the Apostles for the glorious Purpose of propagating the Gospel through the World, that the same must exist in after Ages. They were endued with a Power of Working Miracles to prove the Truth of their Doctrine, and their being sent by Christ to preach it; but not to prove that they had a Power to forgive Sins, as Christ himself did. Nor did any one of them preach Forgiveness in his own Name. We do not find that any one of them ever said to any, I absolve thee, or I forgive thee. Indeed as they had the Gift of discerning Spirits, they were sometimes enabled to strike incorrigible Sinners with Diseases or Death; and in this sense they bound their Sins upon them, which was intirely owing to the immediate Judgment of God, who visibly employed the Apostles as the Instruments of his vengeance. But as miraculous operations were withdrawn from the Church after the Apostolic Age, it must be the highest insolence in the greatest Churchmen upon Earth to lay Claim to a Power, which even the Apostles themselves never exercised. The true meaning of St. John in this Passage, compared with all those, where we are informed how the Apostles discharged their Office in Obedience to their Master, seems to be this: Whoever complied with the Terms of the Gospel, published by them; and in which they had been instructed by Christ, their Sins should be forgiven, and whosoever would not, their Sins should be retained. Though the Apostles had no Power to forgive Sins; yet they had an Authority, properly speaking, to preach the Doctrine of Forgiveness upon Repentance, because they received an immediate Commission from Christ to preach it to Jews and Gentiles. And in Confirmation of their divine Commission, they had, as before observed, a Power of working Miracles. But now since this Doctrine hath been revealed to us in the Gospel; to declare to any one that if he doth repent of his Sins, they are forgiven him; if he doth not, that they are retained, implies in it nothing of Authority or Power in any sense. Any one, surely, may now declare this, upon the authority of the Word of God.

2. The two ordination Hymns directed to the Holy Ghost as eternal God, and in one of which the gross Athanasian Doctrine, of three coequal Persons and one God is expressed, may

may be justly deemed to contain something superstitious and ungodly, as no such worship is warranted by the New-Testament, *all* the Forms of worship recorded there being absolutely inconsistent with it.

Upon the whole, this Article, which declares that the Book of Consecration, &c. contains nothing of itself superstitious or ungodly, upon Examination appears to be false.

Thus have I finished my remarks upon the most obnoxious Articles: and have set before you, my honest christian Readers, a Picture which deserves your most serious consideration. A contrast the most striking, you ever beheld. On the one Hand, the Christian Religion in its purity, a true, rational and consistent Scheme; on the other, the Obnoxious Articles of our Church, Absurd, Inconsistent and Unchristian. Can you hesitate a Moment which to choose? For it appears by ocular demonstration, that the Doctrines of Men are directly contrary to the Laws of God. Can you suffer yourselves to be imposed upon, with the Gospel of Christ in your Hands; and follow your Leaders to your Ruin? Save yourselves from this untoward Generation; and be not afraid of their Terrors. When the Corruptors of the Christian Religion, appear before their Lord and Judge, what will they say in excuse? What answer will they make? It would have been better for them, had they never seen the Gospel. I tremble for them! Our Saviour's words to the *Jews*, who had corrupted true Religion, are well worth our Notice: In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the Commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men. But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you also, ye lawyers: for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe unto you lawyers: for ye have taken away the key of Knowledge, &c. Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He that is of God, heareth God's Word: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Ye Serpents, ye generation of Vipers, how can ye escape the Damnation of Hell? Every plant (Doctrine) which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

"O ye Fathers of the Church! ye spiritual Lords and Rulers!" I humbly beseech you; awake, awake! Shake yourselves. Stand up; stand up, like men, concerned for the honour of God, for the interest of *Religion*, and the Salvation of mens Souls! Let these engage the chief attention of your Minds, and let most of your Time and Strength be spent

spent in promoting these, for this is your proper Province. At least do something for the good of the civil community, in return for the vast expence, which they are at, yearly in maintaining you; for the supporting and advancing, the cause of *Virtue and Religion* among us: On the prosperous State of which, the public weal doth chiefly depend. This is what they have a right to demand from you, and to insist upon. But if you will not, it is to be hoped the Legislature of the nation will take into their consideration, the present State of *our established Church*. For till there is a reformation made, in our *Ecclesiastical Constitution*, in vain shall we hope for a *reformation of manners*, among us."

Son of Man, I have made thee a Watchman unto the House of *Israel*; therefore hear the Word at my Mouth, and give them warning from me. Ezek. iii. 17. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thes. i. 7. 8. Yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel. 1 Cor. ix, 16.

On Subscription to Articles.

That the requiring Subscription to the thirty nine Articles, is a great imposition. That the greater part of the Clergy subscribe the Articles without ever examining them, and others do it because they *must* do it, though they can hardly satisfy their consciences about some things in them. Bp. Burnet. The unchristian art of confessing the Faith without believing it. An art which, I am sorry to say, has of late been brought to its utmost Perfection: *Brydges*.—I do not only doubt, says, Dr. Clayton, whether the compilers of the Articles, but even whether any two *thinking men* are agreed exactly in their Opinion, not only with regard to all the Articles, but even with regard to any one of them. Were I to subscribe the *Thirty-nine Articles*, I should look upon myself as one, who had made *shipwreck of Faith*, and a good conscience; and should not be able to vindicate myself, from the guilt of *Perjury*. I am sure, I should do that which could be no more justified, than *Perjury*. The sins of the Nation have been, and still are, lamented and complained of by good men. But there is one, which I do not remember to have been sufficiently taken notice of by any, I mean the *Clergy's subscribing to Articles* which they do not believe; and in words acknowledging them to be *agreeable to the word of God*; while in their own Judgment, they are persuaded, they are not so. *Letters, &c.*

We are told that above 100 subscribe to Articles every Year. The Terms are, subscribe, or starve. By this means the best men are excluded from the Ministry. Our Ministers
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ought to give us God's Will in God's Words; but this would look like Perjury. Besides they dare not; for if a beneficed Minister shall maintain any Doctrine repugnant to the said *Articles*, &c. it shall be lawful for the Bishop to deprive him. Rare encouragement this to study, and Preach the Gospel! The Christian Religion at this Time is in a condition not much unlike that of its great Master, for, between *Superstition* on one Hand, and *Enthusiasm* on the other, it is *Crucified between two Thieves*. As it is excellently said by the Lord Bishop of B—— My dear *Unitarians*, Blessed are your Eyes, for they see. I beg of you for God's sake: I beseech you in the Name of Christ, use your best endeavours to bring about a Reformation. Make application to King and Parliament; they will hear you. His Majesty's advice to the Clergy was, Preach or Teach the Doctrine of your Master. And his late Majesty has sometimes said to a late great Prelate, when paying his Duty at Court, "Is there any Thing, my Lord, you would have me do for the Church of *England*? If there is, let me know it."——If any oppose you, Challenge them to prove the Truth of the Articles from the Gospel, and if they can, well; if not the Articles, Athanasian Creed, &c. ought to be banished from this Protestant Church, in order to render its Practice consistent with its own Solemn Determinations. But if you fail in your Attempt, then turn your Houses into Churches, and as many as can, keep Chaplains; those that cannot, need not fear, they have as good a right to Preach the Gospel, and (I think) to administer the Sacraments, as those who call themselves successors of the Apostles.

How long, O Lord God Almighty, wilt thou suffer this usurpation of thy Authority, corruption of thy Gospel, and misleading of thy People? O let thy Kingdom come, and thy Will be known and done on Earth, as it is in Heaven. Amen.

Queries relative to the foregoing Subject.

1. Q. Whether Subscription to the 39 Articles, as now practised, be not a grievous and national Sin; it being expressly

* But tho' the Bishops are invested with such Canonical Power, yet it ought to be acknowledged as a Remarkable instance of the moderation of the governing Powers, that for many Years they have not exercised it against those, who have preached against some of the Established Articles, nor even against some few who have laid aside the Athanasian Forms.

precisely contrary to all true Principles of Religion, and of Christianity in particular, to subscribe one Thing and preach another, or in direct opposition to Articles outwardly professed?

2. Q. Whether the Governing Powers are not under indispensable obligations to remove this heavy Burden from the Consciences of serious and thinking Persons?

3. Q. Whether a gross Corruption of manners may not be justly dreaded from a Continuance in religious Corruptions, when known to be such?

4. Q. Whether a tender Pity and Compassion for the Spiritual State of so many Souls as are engaged in this infamous Practice, should not powerfully excite our Governors to reform what they must know cannot possibly be defended upon the Principles of Christianity: even tho' the Attempt and Accomplishment of it should be attended with considerable Difficulties and Hazards; which cannot be supposed to be the Case, considering the Preparation already made for it, and the Numbers who earnestly wish for this salutary Work?

5. Q. Whether young Persons designed by their Friends for Holy Orders, do not labour under very great Hardships by the very nature of their Education, if they take Pains to qualify themselves for the Ministry by a sincere Study of the Word of God?

6. Q. Whether it be not very natural for young Persons to think, that Locke, Newton, and Clarke, whose Philosophical Works are generally recommended and studied in the Universities, might entertain rational Sentiments upon theological Subjects as well as Philosophical?

7. Q. Whether the Candidates for the Ministry, if they embrace the theological Principles of those glorious and rational Believers (whose Authority by the way the reputed Orthodox gladly employ in their debates with unbelievers) can consistently with Conscience subscribe the 39 Articles?

8. Q. Whether considerable Numbers, when they have spent their Time and Fortune in preparing themselves for the Ministry, will not be reduced to the terrible necessity either of subscribing in opposition to the Dictates of conscience, or else of enduring immediate Distress, or at least many inconveniences of human Life?

9. Q. With respect to the latter Case, whether taking up the Cross of Christ, be not at all Times an essential Duty of Christianity?

10. Q. Whether the Gospel could at first have been propagated thro' the World, if the Professors of it had not punctually complied with this difficult Duty?

11. Q.

11. Q. Whether Popery could have been demolished by our first Reformers, if they had suffered themselves to be governed by worldly considerations?

12. Q. Whether a patient submission to a low Estate upon the Principles of Conscience, be not far better; and even more happy, considering the expre's promise of an extraordinary support given by our blessed Saviour to all his faithful Servants under difficult Trials, than the Possession of the greatest Preferment in opposition to the Dictates of Conscience?

13. Q. Whether it be not an Event to be wished and prayed for, that such a Spirit would attend a considerable number of young Persons in the Universities designed for the Ministry as to form themselves into a religious Society upon the Plan of the New-Testament; and that in consequence of this, they would present themselves in a Body before the Arch-Bishop, or some of the most eminent Bishops, with a Bible in their Hands, professing their Readiness to give their Solemn Assent and Consent to any Propositions taken out of the Word of God, and their serious Resolution to instruct the People committed to their Charge, agreeable to the expre's Declarations of Christ and his Apostles; but that they were determined not to subscribe the 39 Articles, nor conform to the present Liturgy any farther than it was warranted by Scripture, the grand Foundation, on which the Church of England is built?

14. Q. Whether in case this Christian Proposal was rejected, as being contrary to the Act of Uniformity established by King, Lords and Commons, it would not be vastly better for the Spiritual State of those young Persons, and possibly not worse for their temporal Interest; if they absolutely refused orders upon the legal Terms, and depended upon God and Providence for a support, on the glorious Principle of preferring the Authority of Christ, the only Head of the Church, before that of the greatest mortals?

15. Q. Whether in this case the Arch-Bishop and Bishops might not be properly reminded of the important Duty they owe to Christ, the Supreme Pastor, in consequence of the Trust committed to them of sending forth Ministers into the Church; and what Account they will be able to render to him at the Day of Judgment for excluding from the Christian Ministry his faithful Servants, duely qualified for the Office, according to his Law, prescribed in the Scripture Canon?

16. Q. Whether at that awful Time it will be thought a sufficient Plea (and what else can be urged?) that these worthy persons were rejected by the Authority of the civil Magistrate, and by the Act of Uniformity?

17. Q. Whether such a low and trifling Plea, as it will then really appear, will not be received with an indignant Look by the surrounding Company of Martyrs and Confessors, who nobly sacrificed their Lives, or endured bitter sufferings, rather than give up their Conscience to the Authority of the civil Magistrate; and likewise will draw a severe Frown from the Face of the Judge, whose express Command it was that his Disciples should call no Man upon Earth Master; that they should acknowledge no Authority in matters of Religion, but that of Jesus Christ?

18. Q. Whether all methods that are consistent with Christianity, should not be employed to reform this national Church, which had no Right to exist at first but upon the glorious Privilege of professing Scripture Doctrines, and practising Scripture Worship?

19. Q. Whether it would not redound to the Honour of the present Clergy, to be the first movers in the Work of Reformation, as it has been a Reproach frequently cast upon them, that they are generally so much attached to their Creeds, Articles, and Forms of Worship, right or wrong, that they are too apt to obstruct all Measures taken to alter them, and reduce them to the Standard of Scripture?

20. Q. Whether those Clergymen who are convinced of the Errors yet remaining in this Protestant Church, are not obliged to omit, or alter, in the public Service what is not warranted in the Word of God?

21. Q. Whether they are not under strict obligations to give up Subscription to the 39 Articles, tho' they are cut off from any future Preferment?

22. Q. Whether the Exercise of Christian Discipline, according to the Directions of Christ and the Practice of the primitive Church, would not be of vastly greater Service to secure the true Interest of the Church, and a proper Reverence for the Ministers of it, than all the Oaths and Subscriptions that can possibly be invented by the wit of Men?

23. Q. Whether upon the whole these things don't deserve the serious Consideration of the Clergy and Laity, as they would prove, if reduced to Practice, an inestimable Blessing to this Church and Kingdom?

Public

Public Recantation.

Whereas I George Williams, thro' the usual Prejudice of Education, and a Regard to the Church established by Law, conformed to all the Creeds and Forms of Worship prescribed in the common Prayer Book of the Church of England; and took it for granted, that all the 39 Articles, and the many Propositions of which they consist, were strictly true and agreeable to Scripture; I do hereby make this solemn Recantation of my religious Errors in Faith and Practice, and freely declare that the Athanasian Creed, and the Forms of Worship founded upon it, are false, Antiscriptural, and a gross Imposition upon the consciences of Christian People. I likewise renounce a considerable Part of the 39 Articles, (viz. what has been above animadverted upon) as being expressly contrary to the plain Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, and having a natural Tendency to undermine the cause of Christianity, and expose it to the Scoffs of the unbelieving World. As the Governing Powers take no care to reform such gross Corruptions, I, tho' a private Christian, think it a proper Method to protest in a Solemn manner against all flagrant Errors that still remain in this Protestant Church, and the Authority by which they are supported.

Creed of a Church-man,

That they should believe a Lie. 2 Thef. ii. 11.

Art. 6. I believe the Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to Salvation.

I believe the Catholic Faith (i. e. the Athenasian Creed) is absolutely necessary to Salvation, and whosoever does not so believe, shall perish everlastingly.

Art. 1. I believe there is but one living and true God without Body, Parts or Passions.

Ibid. I believe the same one God is composed of three Parts or Persons, one of whom died.

N. Creed. I believe in one God the Father Almighty.

A. Creed. I believe in three eternal co equal Gods, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Ibid.

- Ibid. I believe the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped.
- Litany. I believe that the Father is to be worshiped, singly or alone, the Son singly, and the Holy Ghost singly.
- A. Creed. I believe the Son and Holy Ghost are equal to and; Art. the Father.
- I believe the Son is begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father.
- I believe Contradictions are necessary to Salvation, and therefore believe that *three* are not more than *one*; and *one* is not less than *three*; and that *two* is one, and one is two.
- Art. 2. I believe that Christ is the very and eternal God.
- Ap Creed. I believe that Christ is a Man. — I believe that Christ is both God and Man. Ath. Creed.
- Ibid. I believe that Christ sitteth at the right Hand of God the Father Almighty.
- I believe that the Father and Son are one individual Being.
- Ibid. I believe the Father and Son to be two individual Persons.
- A. Creed. I believe the Son and Spirit to be self-existent and Independent.
- Ibid. I believe that the Son and Spirit are neither self-existent nor Independent.
- Art. 3. I believe that Christ went down into Hell.
- I believe he was at the same time in Paradise.
- Art. 11. I believe that the *Merits* of Christ will entitle me to Salvation.
- I believe I shall not be saved, except I keep the Commandments.
- First Sent. I believe that God made Man a free Agent.
- Art. 10. I believe that Man is passive, has no Power to do any thing; but is acted upon like a Machine.
- I believe that God is Good, Just and Merciful.
- Art. 9 17. I believe that God is Evil, Unjust and Cruel.
- I believe that a Child Baptized is fit for the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Art. 9. I believe that a Child unbaptized deserves eternal Damnation.
- Common I believe that to eat Bread and drink Wine in Service. Christ is a great Mystery.
- I believe that God made all men to be saved.
- Art

Art. 17. I believe that God made a great Number of men to be Damned.

I believe that God is no respecter of Persons.

I believe that God will condemn the greater Part of mankind for not believing what they never heard of.

I believe that the Priest has Power to absolve men from all their Sins.

I believe that the Bishop has Power to give the Holy Ghost to the Priest. (1)

I believe that King Charles the 1st. was a Saint and a Martyr.

I believe that King Charles 2d. was a *most religious and gracious King*. (2)

I believe that all that do not believe as I do, cannot be saved.

Query. Whether this Creed, with an Anathema at its Tail, might not be used in the Church, because every Article of it is just?

(1) Query. Whether this be the same Holy Ghost mentioned in Article the 5th, said to be "very and eternal God."

(2) The words added in his Reign.

Christians, if you find these Contradictions in the New-Testament, which is your Rule of Faith and Practice, believe them: But if you cannot, ask your Hearts what you are doing?

Therefore I said, surely these are Poor, they are Foolish, for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the Judgment of their God. Jer. v. 4.

C O N C L U S I O N.

Would to God that *Christians* would be content with the Plainness and Simplicity of the Gospel! That they would be persuaded to make no other Terms of Communion, than what *Jesus* himself has made! That they would not vend under the name of Evangelical Truth, the absurd and contradictory Schemes of ignorant or wicked Men! That they would part with that Load of Rubbish which makes thinking men almost sink under the weight, and gives too great a Handle for Infidelity! That they would distinguish betwixt *Human* Opinions and *Revealed* Truths! That they would

would see the difference betwixt Authority and Reason! That they would look upon *Jesus* as the *Author* and *Finisher* of Faith! That they would think, that they are not qualified to make any other Terms of Acceptance with God, than what are already published by our Saviour! That they would look upon all serious Christians, as Members of the one Body of Christ! That they would cease from unchristian and inhuman Damning, Persecuting, Burning one another, for not assenting to the Words of men, as to the Words of God! Then *Christianity* would soon become the Joy of the whole Earth, and *Infidelity* would lose its main, I may say, its only support.

A. A. Sykes,

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only Wise God, be Honour and Glory for ever and ever, Amen,

F I N I S.

